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THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI

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LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI

Poème français du XIII^e Siècle

TRADUIT EN ANGLAIS

PAR

ALICE KEMP-WELCH

PUBLIÉ D'APRÈS RAYNAUD, PRÉCÉDÉ

D'UNE INTRODUCTION PAR

L. BRANDIN

Archiviste-Paléographe

ET ILLUSTRÉ D'APRÈS UN IVOIRE CONTEMPORAIN

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1903

THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI

A 13th Century French Romance

DONE INTO ENGLISH

BY

ALICE KEMP-WELCH

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION BY

L. BRANDIN, PH.D.

WITH CONTEMPORARY ILLUSTRATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

At the Court of the Dukes of Burgundy, as well as at that of the Count of Flanders, and amongst the *entourage* of Queen Margaret of Navarre, the dainty story of the Chatelaine of Vergi caused many tears to be shed. It made the hearts of many great lords and ladies beat, and excited the pity of many a poet. Touching allusions to the heroine of the story have been made by various illustrious writers. Froissart, for example, guided by Dame Pleasance and Dame Esperance into the garden of King Love, saw her there with Helen, Genievre, Isoud, Hero, Polyxena, Dame Equo, and Medea, and he ranks her love with the sad loves

of Tristan and Isoud, and of the Lady of Fayel and the Chatelain of Couci.

Coming to us thus, escorted by long centuries of tears and admiration, the Lady of Vergi does not need a lengthy introduction. Her tragic story appears here in its original form, and her sublime love will give pleasure to-day for the self-same reasons which, in the time of Philip le Bel and Edward I., held the noble ladies of Burgundy and Flanders under its spell. All that can be said is that, after the lapse of six centuries, some of the features of the story may appear somewhat antiquated, and that, perchance, it may surprise some fair reader, possessed of only a dim notion of the code of love which prevailed in the glorious age of chivalry, to learn that the mere knowledge that her secret had been betrayed by her lover could, at the

end of the thirteenth century, cause the death of a noble lady. Even with this wrinkle on its brow, and with others which a careful search may disclose, this little romance bears gaily its well-nigh six hundred and fifty years. (The absence of the conventional and the traditional, the depth and variety of the psychological analysis, the naïveté of the moral, the unexpectedness of the philosophical ideas—these are the causes of its eternal youth. The colours in which the author has painted the various characters in the story, and the sentiments which he has attributed to them, retain, and will ever retain, their original freshness.) One reads and re-reads the pages where he describes the base jealousy of the Duchess; her utilitarian conception of the love by which she tries to allure the brave Knight; her influence over her weak husband, unable

to sleep as soon as she has persuaded him that one of his vassals has threatened his honour, and equally unable to keep a secret when his wife turns her back upon him in bed; those, again, where both the cleverness and the artlessness of the Chatelaine stand out; those where, in her pathetic agony, she pours forth bitter regrets, which soon give place to a sad resignation, to end in a last thought of pardon for him whose treachery has killed her; those where the character of the Knight is portrayed by his uprightness and by his want of tact, as well as by his hesitation between the loss of his mistress and that of his honour; and those, finally, where so openly, so innocently, and so intelligently, the little dumb messenger carries, on his four paws, the hopes of the two lovers.

Is this little romance as true to fact as it is realistic? M. Gaston

Raynaud tells us in the following words what *he* feels on this point, when he says: 'The poet, writing after the event, has dramatised the story of a great scandal at the Court of Burgundy between 1267 and 1272, a scandal in which Hugo IV., Beatrice of Champagne, and Laura of Lorraine certainly played a part' (*Romania*, xxi. p. 153). This suggestion is interesting, but as the romance was written about the year 1280, according to M. Gaston Paris (see his *Littérature française du moyen âge*, second edition, p. 253), or between 1282 and 1288 in the opinion of M. Raynaud, the author must have been a contemporary of the personages alluded to, and thus it is hardly conceivable that he should have ventured to take such liberties with current events as he must have done if he was recording the scandal alluded to. He

must have known, in common with every one else in Burgundy at the time, that Hugo IV. died in 1272 at St. James of Compostella, and yet he tells us that 'he went on a crusade beyond the sea, *from whence he returned not*, for there he became a Templar.'

Still less comprehensible is it that he should have ventured to place the date of Laura of Lorraine's death at least ten years earlier than the actual date, which must necessarily have been *after* 1281, as in that year, as we learn from Du Chesne's *Histoire de la Maison de Vergy*, she did homage to Otho, Count of Burgundy, on the Tuesday after the Feast of St. Bartholomew, for her dower of the Seignory of St. Autrey. And last of all, it is inconceivable that he should have represented Hugo IV. as having killed Beatrice of Champagne, whose death only

occurred in 1295, *i.e.*, twenty-three years after Hugo IV. had quitted this world, and thirteen years (or, if we admit the *terminus ad quem* given by M. Raynaud, possibly only seven years) after the story was written. These strong objections against the value of this historical estimate of the story lead us to suppose that the author, who, as we gather from a few peculiarities of the dialect to which his work belongs, was a Burgundian, was writing for a Burgundian public, and was naturally induced to choose the names of Vergi and Burgundy on account of the personal interest which he himself took in his, and which he thought his countrymen would take in their, own province, as well as on account of the pleasure it would give to all Burgundians to find an interesting story connected with scenes familiar to them.

The poem has come down to us in eight MSS. of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and seven of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Ten of these are in Paris. They are all in the Bibliothèque Nationale, and bear the following numbers:—375 (written in 1288), 780 (end of the fifteenth century), 837 (end of the thirteenth century), 1555 (fourteenth century), 2136 (fourteenth century), and 2236 (fifteenth century), 4531 (beginning of the fourteenth century), 15219 (sixteenth century), 25545 (thirteenth century), and Moreau 1719 (an eighteenth century copy of a MS. of the end of the thirteenth, or beginning of the fourteenth century).

The Municipal Library at Valenciennes possesses one MS., No. 398 (fifteenth century), and there is one in the Royal Library at Berlin, Hamilton 257 (end of the thirteenth

century), one in the Library at Hamburg (middle of the fifteenth century), and one in the Bodleian Library, 445 (second half of the fifteenth century). It is difficult to classify these MSS. strictly, and hitherto it has only been possible satisfactorily to edit the *Chatelaine of Vergi* from the earliest ones.

The first edition is the result of the labours of Méon in 1808, and appeared in vol. iv. of *Fabliaux et Contes*, pp. 296 to 326. It only takes into account the MSS. 375, 837, and 25545. The second edition appeared in 1892, in vol. xxi. of the *Romania*. M. Gaston Raynaud, to establish his text, made use of the thirteenth and fourteenth century MSS. only. None of these MSS. are derived immediately from the original text. They all contain, indeed, one error which seems to throw a new light upon their common origin.

They all have, in verse 393, 'le chevalier,' instead of 'le chienet.' This shows that they must be referred back to some earlier MS., where the abbreviation *ch'* had been already wrongly interpreted as signifying what it usually does, *Chevalier*, whereas in this instance it ought to have received an entirely different rendering, namely *Chienet*.

In addition to an ably edited text, M. Raynaud's edition contains an introduction which gives the most complete information about the early MSS., the transcripts, and the popularity of this romance, and one cannot do better than refer the reader to it. Above all, he will find portrayed there, by a master-hand, the fate that befell this story from the end of the thirteenth century onwards. He will see how the Lady of Vergi became, as early as the fourteenth century, the Lady of Vergier,

and how she was confounded, at the end of the eighteenth century, with the heroine of a romance which enjoyed the greatest success in the Middle Ages—the *Chatelain of Couci*. The success of the *Chatelaine of Vergi* was considerable. It was copied and translated in France, and in other places abroad. The poem was so much in vogue, that it comes down to us, as mentioned already, in as many as fifteen MSS.

In the fourteenth century a Netherlandish edition, in verse, appeared, printed straight from the original French, says M. Raynaud, and this became the source of a popular version printed for the first time at Antwerp about 1550, and reprinted at Amsterdam in the seventeenth century. In France some unknown writer revived it, about 1540, in a new form, under the title of *Livre d'amours du chevalier et de la dame*

chastellaine du Vergier comprenant l'estat de leur amour et comment elle fut continuée jusques à la mort.

Marguerite of Navarre hardly did more than translate it into prose in the seventieth tale, seventh day of the *Heptameron*. Bandello reproduced, in part iv. of his *Novelle*, and almost without change, Marguerite of Navarre's version. François de Belleforest retranslated into French Bandello's story, and it forms No. 84 of his *Histoires tragiques de Bandello*. In the eighteenth century it became a work of pure fiction, from the pen of M. de Vignacourt, in *La Comtesse de Vergi, nouvelle historique, galante et tragique*, and from that of an anonymous writer who published in 1766 *La Comtesse de Vergi et Raoul de Couci, époux et amans fidèles, histoire véritable, galante et tragique.*

Paper and parchment did not suffice to tell the story of the Chatelaine

of Vergi; ivory also was used to perpetuate its memory. An ivory casket of the fourteenth century, now in case F in the Mediæval Room in the British Museum, represents the various episodes of the story with great accuracy. It is from this casket that the illustrations accompanying this translation have been taken. The finish of detail, and the naïveté and variety of the figures, are remarkable, as is also the harmonious grouping of the individuals represented. This casket differs very little from another one in the Louvre (noticed in M. Émile Molinier's *Catalogue du Musée du Louvre*), which also has great artistic value, and likewise dates from the fourteenth century. The only difference between the two is to be found in the addition of a scene which is only represented on the Louvre casket, the eighteenth compartment of which shows the Duke, after

beheading the Duchess with his sword, kneeling before an ecclesiastic, by whom he is being blessed and presented with a cross.

There are also various fragments of caskets in existence which represent the same subject (see *Le Catalogue de l'Exposition retrospective de l'art français au Trocadéro, in* 1889, *p.* 18, *Nos.* 122 *and* 123), and which prove the favour in which the poem was held.

Our personal researches in the 'Salle des estampes' of the Bibliothèque Nationale, and in several other museums, have not put us on the track of any other documents inspired by the *Chatelaine of Vergi.* There must, however, be others. On tapestries particularly this legend must often have been represented, and we hope that some reader, fond of archæological research, will be induced to follow up the search in

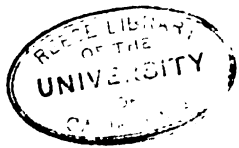
other directions, and not be discouraged by the failure of our own efforts.

In conclusion, our sincerest thanks are due to all those who have been so good as to give us their aid: to Messrs. Gaston Paris[1] and Picot, to M. Paul Meyer (who has been kind enough to read the proofs), and above all to M. Gaston Raynaud, who, with his habitual courtesy, has given permission for the reproduction, at the end of the present translation, of the text of the poem which he published in the *Romania*, and in which reproduction only a few modifications of his text have been introduced, the only one of any importance being the one in verse 393 alluded to above.

L. BRANDIN.

[1] As this Introduction is passing through the press comes the news of the irreparable loss which Romance Philology and the *Literae Humaniores* have sustained in the death of the illustrious scholar, the acknowledged master of mediæval philology.

THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI



THE CHATELAINE OF VERGI

SOME there are who make pretence to be loyal, and so truly to keep secret that which is confided to them, that in the end trust is put in them. And when it happens that any one has discovered unto them his secret so far that they know of his love and of his doings, forthwith they noise it abroad, and make merry over it. And then it comes to pass, therefore, that he who has made known the secret, loses all delight, and the greater the love between them, the more grieved

are true lovers when the one thinks of the other, that what should have been kept secret, has been made known. And ofttimes does such mischief come of it, that love dies in great sorrow and shame, as it chanced in Burgundy to a valiant and brave Knight, and to the Lady of Vergi, whom the Knight loved so well, that the Lady gave him her love on this condition, that whensoever he should discover unto another their love, on that day would he lose that love, and the gift which the lady had made to him of herself. And to have pleasure of their love, they devised for the Knight to come alway into an orchard at a certain time, and in nowise to stir from one corner of it

until he had seen a little dog cross the orchard. Then without tarrying might he come to her chamber, and know well that he would find his lady alone.

Thus, unknown to any, did their sweet and secret love longwhile dure. The Knight was handsome and brave, and by his valour he had made himself known to the Duke who ruled in Burgundy. And ofttimes did he go to and fro the Court; and so often went he, that the Duchess conceived a love for him, and made such show of her love, that if his heart had not been elsewhere, readily would he have perceived from her look that she loved him truly. But no response did the Knight make to all her tender

glances, nor did he perceive that she loved him; and because of this, she was sore vexed, and, on a day, thus spake she to him: 'Sire, you are handsome and brave, so say all, God be thanked. Well have you deserved to have for friend one of so high rank that she could bring you honour and good fortune, for such a friend would be of good service to you.'

'My lady,' said he, 'I have not yet thought on that.'

'By my faith,' said she, 'meseemeth a long waiting may be harmful to you. So I counsel you that you may be admitted to a high place, if you perceive that you are well loved there.'

Then he made answer: 'By my

faith, my lady, I know not well the meaning or the purport of your words, neither am I Duke or Count to have right to love in so high a place, and moreover, in nowise could I be loved by so sovereign a lady, even if I made great endeavour thereto.'

'You are, perchance,' said she. 'There have happened many greater marvels, and they may happen again. Tell me if you do not know, even now, that I have given you my love, I who am a noble and honoured lady?' And forthwith the Knight answered: 'My lady, I know it not; but I would that your love were mine by reason of right and honourable deeds. But may God preserve me from that love between you and me which would

bring shame to my lord, for at no price, and in nowise, would I do aught so dishonourable as to cause so base and disloyal a wrong to my rightful and liege lord.'

'For shame!' said she, wrothful. 'And who, fair sir, asked it of you?'

'Ah! my lady,' said he, 'by God's mercy I wot well why I speak thus to you.'

And no more had she pleasure in him, but in her heart she was very wroth, and much cast down, and she thought within herself that if she could, she would be avenged of him, for she was much an-angered. And that night, as she lay beside the Duke, she began to sigh and to weep. And immediately the Duke asked of

her what ailed her, and bade her tell him forthwith. Then said she: 'Surely great sorrow have I to see that a noble lord knows not who is faithful to him, and who is not, but shows more of goodwill and honour to those who are traitors to him, though he perceives it not.'

'By my faith, lady,' said the Duke, 'I know not wherefore you speak thus, but of this I am quit, for at no price would I nourish a traitor if I had knowledge of him.'

'Then hate this one,' said she (and she named unto him the Knight), 'who has ceased not, the whole long day, to pray me for my love. Long-while, said he, had he thought on it, but ne'er had he dared utter it. And

I was resolved, good sire, to make it known unto you forthwith, for it may be true that he has longwhiles thought on it, for never have we heard tell that he loves another. So I pray you, in recompense to me, to protect your honour as seemeth right to you.'

And the Duke, who seemed sore grieved, answered her: 'This shall I search out to the uttermost, and that right soon, I bethink me.'

And that night the Duke was ill at ease, and he had no sleep because of the Knight, whom he loved, and who, because he had done him so grievous wrong, he thought had justly forfeited his love. And all that night he lay awake. And on the morrow he arose early, and sent

for him whom his wife had made him to hate, although he had done no wrong. And as soon as they were alone together, he said: 'Truly it is sad to think that you are so brave and so handsome, but that you are without loyalty. In this have you much deceived me, for so longwhile have I thought you faithful and loyal to me at all times, that I have loved you. I know not how so traitorous a thought could have come to you to ask of the Duchess her love! Such treachery have you committed, that naught more villainous could be conceived. Quit my territory forthwith, for truly I banish you from it, and wholly forbid and deny it unto you. Never enter it more, and know well

henceforth, that if I chance to discover you, I shall hang you.'

And so filled with anger and vexation was the Knight at these words, that he trembled in every limb. And he thought on his Love, and knew that he could have no joy of her if he could not go to and fro, and return to the country whence the Duke would banish him; and great dole made he also that the Duke should wrongfully hold him for a disloyal traitor. And he was in such sore trouble, that he thought of himself as dead and as betrayed. 'Sire,' said he, 'in God's mercy neither believe nor think that I have ever been so daring. Surely never have I, for a single day or a single hour, had thought of that for

which you so wrongfully blame me. Whoever has told unto you this thing, has done evil.'

'Naught will it avail you to deny it,' said the Duke. 'You cannot hide it from me. It is the lady herself who has told to me the way in which you have besought her, like a hateful traitor, and perchance you have said that to her of which she keeps silence.'

And the Knight, sore vexed, made answer: 'My lady has said what it pleases her, and it avails me not to deny it. Naught that I may say can profit me, nor is there aught that I would leave undone by the which I may be believed, for naught of all this has happened.'

'On my soul, that is so,' said the Duke, who thought on his wife, and believed that he knew, forsooth, that she had spoken truly, for never had he heard tell that the Knight loved another. Then said he to the Knight: 'If you will swear to me on your fealty, that you will truly answer me in that which I shall ask of you, by your speech shall I know of a certainty whether or no you have done that of which I have suspicion against you.'

And the Knight, who desired greatly to turn away his lord from the undeserved anger which he bare him, and who feared such loss as to quit the country where was the one who gave him most joy, replied that

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without demur would he do all that the Duke had said, since he thought not on, nor regarded, that which troubled the Duke, and through distress of mind he conceived not that the Duke would ask him aught beside. And in suchwise he took his oath, and the Duke accepted his plighted word.

And thereupon the Duke said to him: 'Know in very truth that I have so loved you, hitherto, with all my heart, that I can in nowise believe of you such baseness or such villainy as the Duchess has told unto me, and not a whit should I hold it as true if this did not make me believe it, and put me in sore doubt, when I observe your manner of

attire, and of all else, by the which it can be known full well that you love some one, whoever it may be; and as, moreover, it is not known to any one the maiden or the lady whom you love, I bethink me that it may be my wife, who has told to me that you have besought her love. Thus can I not be dissuaded by anything from this belief, unless you tell me that you love another with such love, that you leave me altogether without doubt that I know the whole truth. And if this you will not do, then forthwith shall you depart out of my territory as a perjured man.'

And the Knight wist not what to do, for so great was the jeopardy, that either way meant ruin. For if he

spake truly (which, if he did not, he would perjure himself), he held himself as lost; for if he did so great wrong as to break the pledge which he had given to his Lady and his Love, then of a surety would he lose her if it were discovered unto her, and if he told not the truth to the Duke, then would he be a perjurer, and a breaker of his faith, and he would lose both his Country and his Love. But naught would he trouble about his country if his Love remained unto him, whom above all he feared to lose.

And when he had called to mind the great joy and the solace that he had had in her embrace, thus thought he unto himself, that if he did her any hurt, and if by his wrongdoing

he lost her, since he could not take her with him, how could he dure without her? It was with him as with the Chatelain of Couci, who, having in remembrance only his Love, said in a verse of one of his songs—

Pardie, Love, cruel is the remembrance
Now of that sweet solace and company
And joy mine eyes had in the countenance
Of her who was both fellow and friend to me.

When I think on her simple courtesy,
And the sweet words that she was wont to say,
How can my heart endure in my body?
Certes, it is an evil thing to stay.

And in such anguish was the Knight, that he wot not whether to make known the truth, or to lie and leave the country. And whilst he thus pondered, and knew not which

would be the better for him, hot tears came into his eyes, and ran down his cheeks, because of the anguish which possessed him, so that his face was quite wet. And the Duke was heavy at heart, for he thought within himself that something there was that the Knight dared not to discover unto him. And he said in haste to the Knight: 'I see well that you do not confide in me as much as you should. Bethink you that if you privily tell me your secret, I shall make it known unto any one? Certes, before doing so, I would pull out my teeth one by one.'

'Ah!' made answer the Knight, 'God's mercy on me, sire, I wot not what I ought to say, nor what may

happen to me, but rather would I die than lose her whom I should lose if I told unto you the truth, and she knew that, whilst I yet lived, I had confessed it.'

Then said the Duke: 'I swear to you on my body, and on my soul, and on the love and the faith that I owe to you in return for your homage, that never in all my life shall it be told by me to any living creature, high or low.'

And the Knight, weeping, said to him: 'Sire, then will I tell it to you. I love your niece of Vergi, and she loves me, as much as is possible.'

'Tell me now,' said the Duke, 'since you would be believed, knows any one else of this?'

And the Knight answered him, 'Not a living creature.'

Then said the Duke: 'This cannot be! In what manner, then, do you come to her, and how know you the place and the time?'

'By my faith, sire,' said he, 'that will I tell you forthwith, without concealing aught, since you know so much of our affair.' And then he recounted unto him all his comings and his goings, and the prior condition, and the behaviour of the little dog.

Then said the Duke: 'I demand of you that at your next meeting, I shall be your companion, and go with you to this place, for I would know, without delay, that all is so, and my niece will know naught of it.'

'Sire,' said the Knight, 'willingly do I consent to this, so that it does not give you trouble, or weary you, and know surely that I shall go this very night.'

And the Duke said that he would go, and that it would not weary him, but would be to him a solace and a pleasure. And together they devised where they could fitly meet. And as soon as it was nightfall, as it was nigh unto the place where dwelt the niece of the Duke, they took their way until they came to the garden, where the Duke waited not long before he saw the little dog of his niece come to the corner of the orchard, where it found the Knight, who made much ado over it. And

the Knight at once left the Duke, and went his way. And the Duke followed after him close to the chamber, and there hid himself. And he secreted himself as he best could. And by a lofty and spreading tree, well fitted to screen him, he was hidden as by a shield. And from there he saw the little dog enter the chamber, and then saw his niece come forth, and go towards the Knight in the meadow outside the chamber, and he saw and heard the greeting she gave him, by joyfully calling to him and waving her hand, and she clasped him in her fair arms, and kissed him more than an hundred times, and thus longwhile held they converse together. And oft did the

Knight kiss her, and he clasped her in his arms, and said thus to her: 'My lady, my love, my friend, my heart, my mistress, my hope, and all that I love, know that each day that I have been otherwhere, I have greatly hungered to be with you, even as I am now.'

And she answered him: 'My sweet lord and friend, and my dear love, never day or hour has passed that I have not wearied of the delay. But now naught troubles me, for I have with me all that I wish for, since you are well and content, and you are very welcome.'

And the Knight said: 'And you likewise.'

And the Duke, who was hidden

quite close to them at the door, heard all, and so well was the voice and the manner of his niece known unto him, that no longer was he in doubt, and he knew that the Duchess had lied unto him. And greatly was he pleased, for now he saw well that the Knight had wronged him not in such manner as he had had suspicion of him.

And there remained he all the night, whilst the Lady and the Knight were in the chamber in a fair bed, and, without sleeping, had such happiness and such solace one of another, that without doubt it would be but right neither to record it, nor to speak of it, nor to hear tell of it, if one thinks not to have that joy which

love gives for reward to those who love truly; for he who does not expect such a joy, when he hears tell of it, naught does he conceive of it, since he has not his heart set towards love, for none can in anywise know of what worth is such joy, if love has not made it known unto him; and this happiness comes by no means to all, for it is a joy without bitterness, as well as a solace and a delight. But to the lover it seems to last but a short while, and that it will never dure long. And so pleasing to him is the life he leads, that he would that the night were a week, and that the week were a month, and the month a year, and the year three years, and three years twenty, and

twenty years an hundred. And when it is ended, he would that the night should come over again, before the day break.

And in suchwise thought he whom the Duke awaited. But ere dawn it behove him to depart, and his Love came with him to the door. And as they took leave one of another, the Duke saw kisses given, and kisses returned, and he heard their deep sighs, and how they wept as they bade each other farewell. Then many tears were shed, and the Duke heard them name the time when they should yet again meet there. Thus did the Knight depart, and the Lady closed the door. But as long as she could see him, she followed him with

her beautiful eyes, since naught else could she do.

And as soon as the Duke saw that the door was closed, he went his way until he came up with the Knight, who complained unto himself that too shortwhile for him had the night dured. And the like thoughts and words had she from whom he had parted, and to whom it seemed that the night had been too short for her delight, nor had she joy of the day.

Thus thought and spake the Knight when the Duke came up with him, and embraced him, and made much ado over him. Then said the Duke to him: 'I swear to you that henceforth I shall love you, and never again shall I harry you, for all that

you have told unto me is true, and you have not lied by one word unto me.'

'Sire,' said the Knight, 'I pray you thanks. But by the grace of God, I demand and pray of you that you disclose not this secret, else shall I lose my Love, and all joy and comfort, and without doubt I shall die if I know that another than you have knowledge of it.'

'Speak not of it,' said the Duke, 'and know that it will be so well hidden, that no word of it shall be uttered by me.'

And thus communing, they came to the place whence they had set out. And that day, when they were met to eat, the Duke looked more kindly

at the Knight than ever before, and so filled with anger and mortification at this was the Duchess, that in silence she arose from the table, and made semblance to be sick with faintness, and she went to her bed, where she had little pleasure. And the Duke, when he had well feasted, and washed himself, straightway went unto her, and made her sit on her bed, and commanded that none should remain in the chamber with them. And forthwith it was done as he commanded.

And the Duke immediately asked of her how this sickness had come to her, and what ailed her. And she made answer: 'May God defend me, never did I suspect, but now, when I

sat me down to eat, that you had not in you more of sense and reason than I perceived when you treated as more dear to you than ever him who I have told you has shamed and humiliated me; and when I saw that you looked at him more kindly even than heretofore, such sorrow and anger had I, that no longer could I remain.'

'Ah! my sweet friend,' said the Duke, 'know that I shall believe none of it, either from you or from any other, that ever by any chance has that happened of which you have told me, for I know well that he is wholly quit of it, and has never thought on it. Thus much have I learnt of his affairs, but inquire not further of me.'

And thereupon the Duke departed, and she remained very pensive, for never a day that she lived would she have an hour's ease until she had learnt more of that of which the Duke had forbidden her to question him; and now no prohibition could restrain her, for a ruse suggested itself unto her by the which she could of a certainty know of it if she could endure until the night, when she had the Duke in her embrace. Well knew she that without doubt such solace would win her her desire better than aught else. Therefore for this she waited, and when the Duke was come to bed, she withdrew herself to one side, and made semblance that it gave her no joy that the Duke should be

beside her, for well knew she that this was the way to make her husband yield, by making semblance of anger. Therefore thus she remained, that she might the better make the Duke believe that she was much an-angered. And as soon as he had kissed her, she said: 'Very false, and treacherous, and disloyal are you, when you make show of love for me, and have never loved me for a single day. And for longwhile have I been so foolish, that I have believed your word, for ofttimes have you told me that you loved me with a loyal heart; but to-day I see well that in this have I been deceived.'

And the Duke said, 'In what manner?'

'Already have you told me,' said she, filled with jealousy, 'that on mine honour I should not adventure to make inquiry of you of that which you now know so well.'

'And what, in God's name, would you know, sister?'

'That which the Knight has related unto you,' said she, 'the lies and the deceit which he has made you to consider and to believe. But no desire have I to know of it, for of little worth do I deem it to love you with a loyal heart, for whether it was good or ill, never did I see or know aught which I did not make known unto you at once; and now I see that, of your grace, you hide from me your thoughts. Therefore know now, with-

out doubt, that never more shall I have such trust in you, and such love of you, as I have had heretofore.'

Then began the Duchess to weep and to sigh, and she made great endeavour to appear sad. And such pity had the Duke for her, that he said unto her: 'My sweet sister, on no account would I willingly endure your anger and your wrath; but know that I cannot tell unto you that which you desire, without committing too great villainy.'

And forthwith she answered: 'Sire, if you tell it not to me, then from this I see well that you have not enough of trust in me that I shall keep your secret. And know that I much marvel at this, for never has

any secret, either great or small, that you have told to me, been made known by me, and I tell you in good faith that never, whiles I live, could it so happen.'

And when she had thus spoken, she again wept. And the Duke embraced her, and kissed her, and his mind was so ill at ease, that no longer could he resist his desire to discover unto her the secret. Wherefore he said to her: 'Dear lady, by my soul I know not what to do, for so great trust have I in you, that it is not right that I should hide from you aught that I have knowledge of; but greatly do I fear that you will repeat it. Know then, and I now forewarn you, that if you betray me, you shall die for it.'

And she said: 'Wholly do I agree to this. It could not be that I should do you any wrong.'

And then he who loved her, for that he believed, and thought within himself, that she spake truly unto him, related unto her all the story of his niece, as he had learnt it from the Knight, and how that he was in a corner of the orchard where only they two were, when the little dog came to them. And he told her truly of her coming out, and of their going in together, and kept back from her naught of that which he had seen and heard. And when the Duchess heard that the Knight loved one of lower rank, and for this had rejected her, she seemed to herself as dead and

despised, but never did she let this be seen, but agreed, and made promise to the Duke, to hide the affair, and that if it should be made known by her, then might he hang her up to a branch. Nevertheless she longed greatly to speak with her whom she hated from that hour when she learnt that she was the Love of him who had made her ashamed and sad, since, because of this, she well knew that he would not be her Love. And so much was she consumed with anger, that firmly she determined that if at any time, or in any place, she saw the Duke speak with his niece, at once would she herself speak with her, and would hide naught. But never did this chance until the time of Pente-

cost was come, when, on the first day, the Duke held plenary court, to which he sent to summon all the ladies of his land, and first of all his niece, who was the Chatelaine of Vergi.

And whensoever the Duchess saw her, immediately all her blood was stirred within her, since she hated her more than all else in the world. But she knew how to hide her design, and more graciously did she welcome her than ever she had done aforetime; but very great desire had she to speak that of which in her heart she had great anger, and the delay grieved her much. So on the day of Pentecost, when the tables were taken away, the Duchess led the ladies into

her chamber with her, to dress them fitly to appear with grace at the carole.[1] Then no longer could the Duchess keep back her words when she saw her chance, and said, as though in jest: 'Chatelaine, make you very fair, for you have a handsome and brave lover.'

And she made answer simply: 'I know not of what you speak, my lady, for of a truth no desire have I to have any friend who is not in all things to mine own honour, and to that of my lord.'

'Right well I grant it,' said the Duchess, 'but you are a clever

[1] *Carole.*—A dance in which the performers moved slowly round in a circle, singing at the same time.

mistress who has learned how to train the little dog.'

And the ladies heard what was said, but knew not to what it referred, and then went they back with the Duchess to the carole which was going on.

And the Chatelaine remained behind, and her heart was torn with anger, and she paled, and trembled in every limb. And she withdrew into an inner chamber where lay a maiden at the foot of the bed, but she perceived her not. And the Chatelaine, grieving sorely, threw herself on to the bed, and made complaint and lamentation unto herself, and said: 'Great God, have mercy! How comes it that I have heard my lady

chide me in that I have trained my little dog? That can she know from no one, and that I know well, but from him whom I loved, and who has betrayed me. Never could he have told it unto her if it were not that they had close fellowship, and if he did not, without doubt, love her more than he does me whom he has betrayed! I well see that he loves me not at all, since he lacks in his oath to me. Dear God! So much did I love him, that none could love another more. And not an hour of the day or of the night could I think of aught beside. For he was my joy and my pleasure, he was my delight and my pastime, he was my solace and my comfort. How it contented

me to think of him even when I saw him not! Ah! my Love, how has this come to pass? What can have chanced since you have been false to me? I bethought me, as God counselled me, that you would be more loyal to me than was Tristram to Isoud. I loved the half of you, may God have pity on me, more than I did my whole self. Never from first to last have I been guilty of aught in thought, word, or deed, be it great or small, for the which you should hate me, or so basely betray me as to set at naught our love by loving another, and forsake me, and discover our secret. Alas! my Love, greatly do I marvel, for my heart, so help me God, was never thus toward you, for if all

the World, and even all His Heaven and His Paradise, had been given to me by God, I would not have taken them if for them I had had to lose you, for you were my strength and my life and my joy, and naught could have wounded me so much as that my heart should know that yours loved me no longer. Ah, dear Love! Who would have thought that he could do me hurt who said, when he was with me, and I did my utmost to do all his pleasure, that he was all mine, and that he held me as his lady both of his body and his soul? And so sweetly did he say it unto me, that verily I believed him, nor did I in any way think that he could find in his heart anger and hatred against

me, for either duchess or queen, for such delight was it to love him, that I took his heart to mine own; and moreover, I thought of him that he would be my friend all his life long, for wêll know I in my heart, that if he should have died before me, so much did I love him, little while after him could I have dured. Better were it for me to be dead with him, than to live, if I could never see him more. Ah, dear Love! Is it right, then, that he has made known our secret, by the which he loses me? For when I freely gave him my love, I said to him, and truly made covenant with him, that whensoever he made known our love, he would lose me. And since now I have lost him, I cannot,

after such sorrow, live without him for whom I mourn, nor do I desire so to do. No longer have I any pleasure of my life, and so I pray God to send me death, and that, as thus truly I have loyally loved him who has won me, He may have pity on my soul, and grant that honour may come to him who has wrongfully betrayed me and delivered me over unto death, and I pardon him. And my death, meseemeth, is sweet since it comes from him, and when I have in remembrance his love, it grieves me not to die for him.'

And then the Chatelaine ceased to speak, except to say with a sigh, 'Sweet friend, I commend you to God.' And at these words she

clasped her arms tightly together, and her heart failed her, and her face paled; and she swooned with anguish, and lay dead in the middle of the bed, pale, and without colour.

But her Love, who amused himself in the hall at the carole and the dance, knew naught of it, but naught pleased him that he saw there, since he saw not her to whom he had given his heart, at the which he marvelled greatly. And he whispered to the Duke: 'Sire, how comes it that your niece has remained away so long-while, and has not come to the carole? I know not whether you have sent her to prison!'

'And the Duke cast a glance at the carole, for this he had not noticed.

And then he took the Knight by the hand, and straightway went with him into the chamber. And when they found her not there, he commanded and counselled the Knight to seek her in the inner chamber, for he willed it in suchwise, so that they might have solace one of another with embraces and kisses. And the Knight, whom this pleased much, went into the inner chamber, where his Love lay on her back on the bed, without colour, and livid. And forthwith he clasped her in his arms, and kissed her, for right fitting was the time and place. But he found her mouth cold, and that she was all pale and stiff, and from the look of her body he saw well that she was quite dead. And immediately,

all trembling, he cried out: 'What is it, alas? Is my Love dead?'

And the maiden who lay at the foot of the bed hasted to him and said: 'Sire, I well believe that she is dead, for since she came here, she has done naught but reproach herself because of the anger of her Love, about the which my lady had harassed her, and had taunted her about a little dog, the trouble of which has killed her.'

And when the Knight heard that the words that he had spoken to the Duke had killed her, without measure was he discomforted. 'Alas!' said he, 'my sweet Love, the most courteous and the best and the most loyal that ever was, a disloyal traitor has killed

you! It would be just that on me should have fallen this fate, and that no ill should have come to you. But you had so loyal a heart, that you have taken it beforehand on yourself. But I shall do justice upon myself because of the treachery that I have committed.' And he drew from its sheath a sword that hung from a nail, and ran it through his heart, and he fell on the other body, and so much did he bleed, that he died.

And the maiden rushed forth when she saw the lifeless bodies. Dismayed was she at what she saw. And to the Duke, whom she met, she told all that she had heard and seen, and kept back naught from him of how the affair began, and also of the little

trained dog about which the Duchess had spoken.

Then was the Duke furious. And straightway he entered into the chamber, and drew out of the body of the Knight the sword with which he had killed himself. Then immediately went he with great haste straight to the carole, without making further inquiry. And forthwith he went to the Duchess, and made good his promise to her, and struck her on the head with the naked sword which he held, without uttering a word, so wrothful was he. And the Duchess fell at his feet, in the sight of all those of the land, and thereat the knights who were assembled there were sore distressed, after that they had had

great joy. And immediately the Duke, in the hearing of all who would hear it, told the whole affair before all the Court.

Then were there none who did not weep, and above all when they saw the two lovers who were dead, and the Duchess also. And the Court separated in mourning and anger and sorry confusion. And on the next day the Duke caused the lovers to be buried in one grave, and the Duchess in another place. But from this adventure he had such sorrow, that never again was he heard to laugh. And forthwith he went on a crusade beyond the sea, from whence he returned not, for there he became a Templar.

Ah, God! All the distress and trouble of the Knight came to him because he so mischanced as to make known that which he ought to have kept secret, and which his Love had forbidden him to speak of so long as he would have her love.

And from this example one ought to hide one's love with such great judgment, that one may always have in remembrance that to discover it avails naught, and that to hide it is of profit in every way. Whosoever does this, fears not the attacks of false and inquisitive traitors who pry into the loves of others.

LA CHASTELAINE DE VERGI

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Une maniere de gent sont
Qui d'estre loial samblant font
Et de si bien conseil celer
Qu'il se covient en aus fier;
Et quant vient qu'aucuns s'i descuevre
Tant qu'il sevent l'amor et l'uevre,
Si l'espandent par le païs
Et en font lor gas et lor ris;
Si avient que cil joie en pert
Qui le conseil a descouvert,
Quar tant com l'amor est plus grant
Sont plus mari li fin amant,
Quant li uns d'aus de l'autre croit
Qu'il ait dit ce que celer doit;
Et sovent tel meschief en vient
Que l'amor faillir en covient
A grant dolor et a vergoingne,

Si comme il avint en Borgoingne
D'un chevalier preu et hardi
Et de la dame de Vergi
Que li chevaliers tant ama
Que la dame li otria
Par itel couvenant s'amor
Qu'il seüst qu'a l'eure et au jor
Que par lui seroit descouverte
Lor amor, qu'il i avroit perte
Et de l'amor et de l'otroi
Qu'ele li avoit fet de soi.
Et, a cele amor otroier,
Deviserent qu'en .l. vergier
Li chevaliers toz jors vendroit
Au terme qu'ele li metroit,
Ne ne se mouvroit d'un anglet
De si que .l. petit chienet
Verroit par le vergier aler,
Et lors venist sanz demorer
En sa chambre, et si seüst bien
Qu'a cele eure n'i avroit rien
Fors la dame tant seulement.
Ainsi le firent longuement,
Et fu l'amor douce et celee,
Que fors aus ne le sot riens nee.

X Li chevaliers fu biaus et cointes
Et par sa valor fu acointes
Au duc qui Borgoingne tenoit ;
Et sovent aloit et venoit
A la cort, et tant i ala
Que la duchoise l'enama
Et li fist tel samblant d'amors
Que, s'il n'eüst le cuer aillors,
Bien se peüst apercevoir
Par samblant que l'amast por voir.
Mes quel samblant qu'el en feïst,
Li chevaliers samblant n'en fist,
Que poi ne grant s'aperceüst
Qu'ele vers li amor eüst,
Et tant qu'ele en ot grant anui,
Qu'ele parla .l. jor a lui
Et mist a reson par moz teus :
'Sire, vous estes biaus et preus,
Ce dient tuit, la Dieu merci :
Si avrïez bien deservi
D'avoir amie en si haut leu
Qu'en eüssiez honor et preu.
Que bien vous serroit tele amie !
—Ma dame,' fet il, 'je n'ai mie
Encore a ce mise m'entente.

—Par foi,' dist ele, 'longue atente
Vous porroit nuire, ce m'est vis :
Si lo que vous soiez amis
En .l. haut leu, se vous veez
Que vous i soiez bien amez.'
Cil respont : 'Ma dame, par foi,
Je ne sai mie bien por qoi
Vous le dites ne que ce monte,
Ne je ne sui ne duc ne conte
Que si hautement amer doie ;
Ne je ne sui mie a .ll. doie
D'amer dame si souveraine,
Se je bien i metoie paine.
—Si estes,' fet el, 'se devient :
Mainte plus grant merveille avient
Et autele avendra encore.
Dites moi se vous savez ore
Se je vous ai m'amor donee,
Qui sui haute dame honoree.'
Et cil respont isnel le pas :
'Ma dame, je ne le sai pas ;
Mes je voudroie vostre amor
Avoir par bien et par honor.
Mes de cele amor Dieus me gart
Qu'a moi n'a vous tort cele part

Ou la honte mon seignor gise;
Qu'a nul fuer ne a nule guise
N'en prendroie tel mesprison
Com de fere tel desreson
Si vilaine et si desloial
Vers mon droit seignor natural.
—Fi!' fet cele qui fu marie,
'Dans musars, et qui vous en prie?
—Ha! ma dame, por Dieu merci,
Bien le sai, mes tant vous en di.'

Cele ne tint a lui plus plait,
Mes grant corouz et grant deshait
En ot au cuer, et si penssa,
S'ele puet, bien s'en vengera:
Si fu ele forment irie.
La nuit, quant ele fu couchie
Jouste le duc, a souspirer
Commença et puis a plorer,
Et li dus errant li demande
Que c'est qu'ele a, et li commande
Qu'ele li die maintenant:
'Certes,' fait ele, 'j'ai duel grant
De ce que ne set nus hauz hom
Qui foi li porte ne qui non,

Mes plus de bien et d'onor font
A ceus qui lor trahitor sont,
Et si ne s'en aperçoit nus.
—Par foi, dame, ' fet soi li dus,
' Je ne sai por qoi vous le dites ;
Mes de tel chose sui je quites,
Qu'a nul fuer je ne norriroie
Trahitor, se je le savoie.
—Haez donc,' fait ele, ' celui,'
S'el nomma, ' qui ne fina hui
De moi proier au lonc du jor
Que je li donaisse m'amor,
Et me dist que mout a lonc tens
Qu'il a este en cest porpens ;
Onques mes ne le m'osa dire.
Et je me porpenssai, biaus sire,
Tantost que je le vous diroie.
Et si puet estre chose vraie
Qu'il ait pieça a ce pensse :
De ce qu'il a aillors ame
Novele oïe n'en avon.
Si vous requier en guerredon
Que vostre honor si i gardoiz
Com vous savez que ce est droiz.'
Li dus, a cui samble mout grief,

Li dist: 'J'en vendrai bien a chief,
Et mout par tens, si com je cuit.'

A malaise fu cele nuit
Li dus; n'onques dormir ne pot
Por le chevalier qu'il amot,
Qu'il croit que cil eüst mesfait
Par droit que s'amor perdue ait;
Et por ce toute nuit veilla.
L'endemain par matin leva,
Et fist celui a soi venir
Que sa fame li fet hair,
Sanz ce que de riens ait mespris.
Maintenant l'a a reson mis
Seul a seul, ne furent qu'eus deus:
'Certes,' fait il, 'ce est granz deus
Quant proesce avez et beaute,
Et li n'a en vous leaute!
Si m'en avez mout deceü,
Que j'ai mout longuement creü
Que vous fussiez de bone foi
Loiaus a tout le mains vers moi,
Que j'ai vers vous amor eüe.
Si ne sai dont vous est venue
Tel penssee et si trahitresse

Que proie avez la duchesse
Et requise de druerie !
Si avez fet grant tricherie,
Que plus vilaine n'estuet quere.
Issiez errant hors de ma terre !
Quar je vous en congie sanz doute,
Et la vous ve et desfent toute :
Si n'i entrez ne tant ne quant,
Que, se je des or en avant
Vous i pooie fere prendre,
Sachiez je vous feroie pendre.'
Quant li chevaliers ce entent,
D'ire et de mautalent esprent
Si que tuit li tramblent si membre,
Que de s'amie li remembre
Dont il set qu'il ne puet joïr
Se n'est par aler et venir
Et par reperier ou pais
Dont li dus veut qu'il soit eschis ;
Et d'autre part li fet mout mal
Ce qu'a trahitor desloial
Le tient ses sires et a tort.
Si est en si grant desconfort
Qu'a mort se tient et a trahi :
'Sire,' fet il, 'por Dieu merci,

Ne creez ja ne ne penssez
Que je fusse onques si osez:
Ce que me metez a tort seure
Je ne penssai ne jor ne eure;
S'a mal fet qui le vous a dit.
— Ne vous vaut riens li escondit,'
Fet li dus, 'ne point n'en i a:
Cele meïsme conte m'a
En quel maniere et en quel guise
Vous l'avez proie et requise,
Comme trahitres envious;
Et tel chose deïstes vous,
Puet estre, dont ele se test.
— Ma dame a dit ce que li plest,'
Fet cil qui mout estoit mariz;
'Ne m'i vaut riens li escondiz;
Riens ne m'i vaut que j'en deïsse:
Si n'est riens que je n'en feïsse
Par si que j'en fusse creü,
Quar de ce n'i a riens eü.
— Si a,' ce dist li dus, 'par m'ame,'
A cui il souvient de sa fame,
Car bien cuidoit por voir savoir
Que sa fame li deïst voir,
C'onques n'oï que nus parlast

Que cil en autre lieu amast.
Dont dist li dus au chevalier :
'Se vous me volez afier
Par vostre leal serement
Que vous me direz vraiement
Ce que je vous demanderoie,
Par vostre dit certains seroie
Se vous avriiez fet ou non
Ce dont j'ai vers vous soupeçon.'
Cil qui tout covoite et desire
A geter son seignor de l'ire
Qu'il a envers li sanz deserte,
Et qui redoute tele perte
Comme de guerpir la contree
Ou cele est qui plus li agree,
Respont qu'il tout sanz contredit
Fera ce que li dus a dit,
Qu'il ne pensse ne ne regarde
De ce dont li dus se prent garde,
Ne torment ne le lest pensser
Ce que li dus veut demander,
De riens fors de cele proiere :
Le serement en tel maniere
L'en fist, li dus la foi en prist ;
Et li dus maintenant li dist :

'Sachiez par fine verite
Que ce que je vous ai ame
Ça en arriere de fin cuer
Ne me lesse croire a nul fuer
De vous tel mesfet ne tel honte
Comme la duchoise me conte,
Ne tant ne le tenisse a voire,
Se ce ne le me feïst croire
Et me meïst en grant doutance
Que j'esgart vostre contenance
Et de cointise et d'autre rien,
A qoi l'en puet savoir mout bien
Que vous amez ou que ce soit ;
Et quant d'aillors ne s'aperçoit
Nus qu'amez damoisele ou dame,
Je me pens que ce soit ma fame,
Qui me dist que vous la proiez.
Si ne puis estre desvoiez
Por rien que nus m'en puisse fere,
Que je croi qu'ainsi soit l'afere,
Se vous ne me dites qu'aillors
Amez en tel leu par amors
Que m'en lessiez sanz nule doute
Savoir en la verite toute.
Et se ce fere ne volez,

Comme parjurs vous en alez
Hors de ma terre sanz deloi !'
Cil ne set nul conseil de soi,
Que le geu a parti si fort
Que l'un et l'autre tient a mort;
Quar, s'il dit la verite pure,
Qu'il dira s'il ne se parjure,
A mort se tient; s'il mesfet tant
Qu'il trespasse le couvenant
Qu'a sa dame et a s'amie a,
Il est seürs qu'il la perdra,
S'ele s'en puet apercevoir;
Et s'il ne dit au duc le voir,
Parjures est et foimentie,
Et pert le païs et s'amie.
Mes du païs ne li chausist,
Se s'amie li remainsist
Que sor toute riens perdre crient.
Et por ce qu'ades li sovient
De la grant joie et du solaz
Qu'il a eü entre ses braz,
Si se pensse, s'il la messert
Et s'il par son mesfet la pert,
Quant o soi ne l'en puet mener,
Comment porra sanz li durer.

Si est en tel point autressi
Com li chastelains de Couci,
Qui au cuer n'avoit s'amor non,
Et dist en .l. vers de chançon :
Par Dieu, Amors, fort m'est a consirrer
Du dous solaz et de la compaingnie
Et des samblanz que m'i soloit moustrer
Cele qui m'ert et compaingne et amie :
Et quant regart sa simple cortoisie
Et les douz mos qu'a moi soloit parler,
Comme me puet li cuers ou cors durer ?
Quant il n'en part, certes trop est mauves.
Li chevaliers en tel angoisse
Ne set se le voir li connoisse,
Ou il mente et lest le païs.
Et quant il est ainsi penssis
Qu'il ne set li quels li vaut mieus,
L'eve du cuer li vient aus ieus
Por l'angoisse qu'il se porchace,
Et li descent aval la face,
Si qu'il en a le vis moillie.
Li dus n'en a pas le cuer lie,
Qui pensse qu'il i a tel chose
Que reconnoistre ne li ose.
Lors dist li dus isnel le pas :

'Bien voi que ne vous fiez pas
En moi tant com vous devriiez.
Cuidiez vous, se vous me disiez
Votre conseil celeement,
Que jel deïsse a nule gent?
Je me leroie avant sanz faute
Trere les denz l'un avant l'autre.
— Ha!' fet cil, 'por Dieu merci, sire,
Je ne sai que je doie dire
Ne que je puisse devenir,
Mes je voudroie mieus morir
Que perdre ce que je perdroie,
Se le voir dit vous en avoie,
Et il estoit de li seü
Que l'eüsse reconneü
A jor qui fust a mon vivant!'
Lors dist li dus: 'Je vous creant
Seur le cors et l'ame de moi
Et sor l'amor et sor la foi
Que je vous doi sor vostre homage,
Que ja en trestout mon eage
N'en ert a creature nee
Par moi novele racontee
Ne samblant fet grant ne petit.'
Et cil en plorant li a dit:

'Sire, jel vous dirai ainsi;
J'aim vostre niece de Vergi,
Et ele moi, tant c'on puet plus.
— Or me dites donc,' fet li dus,
'Quant vous volez c'on vous en cuevre,
Savoit nus fors vous dui ceste oevre?'
Et li chevaliers li respont:
'Nenil, creature del mont.'
Et dist li dus: 'Ce n'avint onques:
Comment i avenez vous donques,
Ne comment savez lieu ne tens?
— Par foi, sire,' fet cil, 'par sens
Que je vous dirai, sanz riens tere,
Quant tant savez de nostre afere.'
Lors li a toutes acontees
Ses venues et ses alees,
Et la couvenance premiere,
Et du petit chien la maniere.
Lors dist li dus: 'Je vous requier
Que a vostre terme premier
Vueilliez que vostre compains soie
D'aler o vous en ceste voie,
Quar je vueil savoir sanz aloigne
Se ainsi va vostre besoingne:
Si n'en savra ma niece rien.

— Sire,' fet il, 'je l'otroi bien,
Mes qu'il ne vous griet ne anuit;
Et sachiez bien g'irai anuit.'
Et li dus dist qu'il i ira,
Que ja ne li anuiera,
Ainz li sera solaz et geu.
Entr'aus ont devise le leu
Ou assembleront tout a pie.
Si tost comme fu anuitie,
Car asses pres d'iluec estoit
Ou la niece le duc manoit,
Cele part tienent lor chemin
Tant qu'il sont venu au jardin,
Ou li dus ne fu pas grant piece,
Quant il vit le chienet sa niece
Qui s'en vint au bout du vergier
Ou il trova le chevalier,
Qui grant joie a fet au chienet.
Tantost a la voie se met
Li chevaliers, et le duc lait;
Et li dus apres lui s'en vait
Pres de la chambre et ne se muet.
Iluec s'esconsse au mieus qu'il puet:
D'un arbre mout grant et mout large
S'estoit couvers com d'une targe

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Et mout entent a lui celer.
D'iluec vit en la chambre entrer
Le chienet, et ainssy issir
Sa niece et contre lui venir
Hors de la chambre en .l. prael,
Et vit et oï tel apel
Comme ele li fist par solaz
De salut de bouche et de braz:
Et de ses biaus braz l'acola
Et plus de .c. foiz le besa
Ainz que feïst longue parole.
Et cil le rebese et acole,
Et li dist: 'Ma dame, m'amie,
M'amor, mon cuer, ma druerie,
M'esperance et tout quanques j'aim,
Sachiez que j'ai eü grant faim
D'estre o vous si comme ore i sui
Trestoz jors puis que je n'i fui.'
Ele redist: 'Mon douz seignor,
Mes douz amis, ma douce amor,
Onques puis ne fu jor ne eure
Que ne m'anuiast la demeure;
Mes ore de riens ne me dueil,
Car j'ai o moi ce que je vueil,
Quant si estes sains et haitiez,

Et li tres bien venuz soiez !'
Et cil dist : 'Et vous bien trovee !'
Tout oï li dus a l'entree,
Qui mout pres d'aus apoiez fu ;
Sa niece a la voiz bien connu,
Si bien, et a la contenance,
Qu'or en est il fors de doutance,
Et si tient de ce la duchesse
Que dit li ot a menterresse,
Et mout li plest. Or voit il bien
Que cil ne li a mesfet rien
De ce dont il l'a mescreü.
Ilueques s'est issi tenu
Toute la nuit, endementiers
Que la dame et li chevaliers
Dedenz la chambre en .l. lit furent
Et sans dormir ensemble jurent
A tel joie et a tel deport
Q'il n'est resons que nus recort
Ne ne le die ne ne l'oie,
S'il n'atent a avoir tel joie
Comme amors a fin amant done,
Quant sa peine reguerredone ;
Quar cil qui tel joie n'atent,
S'il l'ooit or, riens n'i entent

Puis qu'il n'a a amors le cuer,
Que nus ne savroit a nul fuer
Combien vaut a tel joie avoir,
S'amors ne li fesoit savoir;
Ne teus biens n'avient mie a toz,
Que ce est joie sanz corouz
Et solaz et envoiseüre;
Mes tant i a que petit dure,
C'est avis a l'amant qui l'a,
Ja tant longues ne durera;
Tant li plest la vue qu'il maine,
Que se nuit devenoit semaine
Et semaine devenoit mois,
Et mois uns anz et uns anz trois,
Et troi an .xx. et vint an cent,
Quant vendroit au definement,
Si voudroit il qu'il anuitast
Cele nuit, ainz qu'il ajornast.
Et en itel pensse estoit
Icil que li dus atendoit;
Quar ainz jor aler l'en covint,
Et s'amie o lui a l'uis vint.
La vit li dus au congie prendre
Besier doner et besier rendre,
Et oï forment souspirer

Et au congie prendre plorer.
Iluec ot plore mainte lerme,
Et si oï prendre le terme
Du rassambler iluec arriere.
Li chevaliers en tel maniere
S'en part, et la dame l'uis clot;
Mes tant comme veoir le pot,
Le convoia a ses biaus ieus,
Quant ele ne pot fere mieus.

Quant li dus vit clorre l'uisset,
Tantost a la voie se met
Tant que le chevalier ataint
Qui a soi meïsme se plaint
De la nuit: si comme il a dit,
Trop li avoit dure petit.
Et tel penssee et auteus diz
Ot cele dont il ert partiz,
A cui il samble por la nuit
Que failli ait a son deduit,
Ne du jor ne se loe point.
Li chevaliers ert en tel point
Et de penssee et de parole,
Quant li dus l'ataint; si l'acole
Et li a fet joie mout grant,

Puis li a dit: 'Je vous creant
Que toz jors mes vous amerai
Ne james jor ne vous harrai,
Quar vous m'avez du tout voir dit
Et ne m'avez de mot mentit.
— Sire, 'fet cil,' vostre merci!
Mes por Dieu vous requier et pri
Que cest conseil celer vous plaise,
Qu' amor perdroie et joie et aise
Et morroie sanz nule faute,
Se je savoie que nul autre
Ice savroit fors vous sanz plus.
— Or n'en parlez ja,' fet li dus;
'Sachiez qu'il ert si bien cele
Que ja par moi n'en ert parle.'

Ainsi s'en sont parlant venu
La dont il estoient meü.
Et cel jor quant vint au mengier,
Moustra li dus au chevalier
Plus biau samblant qu'ainz n'avoit fait,
Dont tel corouz et tel deshait
En ot la duchoise sanz fable
Qu'ele se leva de la table
Et a fet samblant par faintise

Que maladie li soit prise :
Alee est couchier en son lit
Ou ele ot petit de delit.
Et li dus, quant il ot mengie
Et lave et bien festoie,
Si l'est tantost alez veoir
Et la fist sus son lit seoir,
Et a commandé que nului
Ne remaingne leenz fors lui.
L'en fet tantost ce qu'il commande.
Et li dus errant li demande
Comment cist maus li est venu
Et que ce est qu'ele a eü.
Ele respont : 'Se Dieus me gart,
Je ne m'en donoie regart
Orains, quant au mengier m'assis,
Que greignor sens et plus d'avis
N'eüst en vous que je n'i vi,
Quant vous tenez plus chier celui
Que je vous ai dit qui porchace
Qu'il a moi honte et despit face ;
Et quant vi que plus biau samblant
Li feïstes que de devant,
Si grant duel et si grant ire oi
Qu'ilueques demourer ne poi.

— Ha,' fet li dus, 'ma douce amie,
Sachiez je n'en croiroie mie
Ne vous ne autre creature
Que onques por nule aventure
Avenist ce que vous me dites ;
Ainz sai bien qu'il en est toz quites,
N'onques ne penssa de ce fere,
Tant ai apris de son afere :
Si ne m'en enquerez ja plus.'

Atant se part d'iluec li dus ;
Et ele remest mout penssive
Que james tant com el vive
Une eure a aise ne sera
Devent que plus apris avra
De ce dont li dus li desfent
Qu'ele ne li demant noient,
Mais ja ne l'en tendra desfensse,
Quar en son cuer engin porpensse
Qu'ele le porra bien savoir,
S'ele se sueffre jusqu'au soir,
Qu'ele ait le duc entre ses braz :
Ele set bien qu'en tel solaz
En fera, lors n'en doute point,
Mieus son vouloir qu'en autre point.

Por ce adonc a tant se tint,
Et quant li dus couchier se vint,
A une part du lit s'est traite ;
Samblant fet que point ne li haite
Que li dus o li gesir doie,
Qu'ele set bien ce est la voie
De son mari metre au desouz
Par fere semblant de corouz.
Por ce se tint en itel guise
Afin que mieus le duc atise
A croire que mout soit irie ;
Por ce sanz plus qu'il l'a besie
Li dist ele : ' Mout estes faus
Et trichierres et desloiaus,
Qui moi moustrez samblant d'amor,
N'onques ne m'amastes nul jor ;
Et j'ai este lonc tens si fole
Que j'ai creü vostre parole
Que soventes foiz disiez,
Que de cuer loial m'amiiez ;
Mes hui m'en sui aperceüe
Que j'en ai este deceüe.'
Et li dust dist : ' Et vous a qoi ?
—Ja me deïstes par ma foi,'
Fet cele qui a mal i bee,

'Que je ne fusse si osee
Que je vous enquerisse rien
De ce que or savez vous bien.
—De qoi, suer, savez vous, por De?
—De ce que cil vous a conte,'
Fet ele, 'mençonge et arvoire,
Qu'il vous a fet pensser et croire.
Mes de ce savoir ne me chaut,
Que j'ai pensse que petit vaut
A vous amer de cuer loial,
Que c'onques fust ou bien ou mal,
Mes cuers riens ne vit ne ne sot
Que ne seüssiez ausi tost ;
Et or voi que vous me celez,
Vostre merci, les voz penssez.
Si sachiez ore sanz doutance
Que james n'avrai tel fiance
En vous ne cuer de tel maniere
Com j'ai eü ça en arriere.'
Lors a commencié a plorer
La duchoise et a souspirer,
Et s'esforça plus qu'ele pot.
Et li dus tel pitie en ot
Qu'il li a dit: 'Ma bele suer,
Je ne soufferroie a nul fuer

Ne vostre corouz ne vostre ire ;
Mes sachiez je ne puis pas dire
Ce que volez que je vous die
Sanz fere trop grant vilonie.'
Ele respont isnel le pas :
'Sire, si ne m'en dites pas,
Quar je voi bien a cel samblant
Qu'en moi ne vous fiez pas tant
Que celaisse vostre conseil ;
Et sachiez que mout me merveil :
Ainc n'oïstes grant ne petit
Conseil que vous m'eüssiez dit,
Dont descouvers fussiez par moi,
Et si vous di en bone foi,
Ja en ma vie n'avendra.'
Quant ce ot dit, si replora ;
Et li dus si l'acole et bese,
Et est de son cuer a malese
Si que plus ne se pot tenir
De sa volente descouvrir.
Puis si li a dit : 'Bele dame,
Je ne sai que face per m'ame,
Que tant m'afi en vous et croi
Que chose celer ne vous doi
Que je sache, mes trop me dot

Que vous n'en parlez aucun mot :
Sachiez, et itant vous en di,
Que se je sui par vous trahi,
Vous en receverez la mort.'
Et ele dist : ' Bien m'i acort ;
Estre ne porroit que feïsse
Chose dont vers vous mespreïsse.'
Cil qui l'aime por ce le croit
Et cuide que veritez soit
De ce que li dist, puis li conte
De sa niece trestout le conte,
Comme apris l'ot du chevalier,
Et comment il fu el vergier
En l'anglet ou il n'ot qu'eus deus,
Quant li chienes s'en vint a eus ;
Et de l'issue et de l'entree
Li a la verite contee,
Si qu'il ne li a riens teü
Qu'il i ait oï ne veü.
Et quant la duchoise l'entent
Que cil aime plus bassement
Qui de s'amor l'a escondite,
Morte se tient et a despite,
Mes ainc de ce samblant ne fist,
Ainçois otroia et promist

Au duc a si celer ceste oevre ;
Se ce est qu'ele le descuevre,
Que l'en la pende a une hart.

Et si li est il ja mout tart
D'a celi parler qu'ele het
Des icele heure qu'ele set
Que ele est amie a celui
Qui li fet et honte et anui
Por itant, ce li est avis,
Qu'il ne vout estre ses amis.
Si afferme tout son porpens
Que, s'ele voit ne lieu ne tens
Qu'a la niece le duc parolt,
Qu'ele li dira ausi tost,
Ne ja ne celera tel chose
Ou felonie avra enclose.
Mes ainc en point n'en lieu n'en vint
Tant qu'a la Pentecouste vint
Qui après fu, a la premiere,
Que li dus tint cort mout pleniere,
Si qu'il envoia par tout querre
Toute les dames de la terre
Et sa niece tout premeraine
Qui de Vergi ert chastelaine.

Et quant la duchoise la vit,
Tantost toz li sans li fremist,
Com cele del mont que plus het.
Mes son corage celer set:
Si li a fet plus bel atret
C'onques devant ne li ot fet;
Mes mout ot grant talent de dire
Ce dont ele ot au cuer grant ire,
Et la demeure mout li couste.
Por ce, le jour de Pentecouste,
Quant les tables furent ostees,
En a la duchoise menees
Les dames en sa chambre o soi
Por eles parer en reqoi,
Por venir cointes aus caroles.
Lors ne pot garder ses paroles
La duchoise qui vit son leu,
Ainz dist ausi comme par geu:
'Chastelaine, soiez bien cointe,
Quar bel et preu avez acointe.'
Et cele respont simplement:
'Je ne sai quel acointement
Vous penssez, ma dame, por voir,
Que talent n'ai d'ami avoir
Qui ne soit del tout a l'onor

Et de moi et de mon seignor.
—Je l'otroi bien,' dit la duchesse,
'Mais vous estes bone mestresse,
Qui avez apris le mestier
Du petit chienet afetier.'

Les dames ont oï le conte,
Mes ne sevent a qoi ce monte;
O la duchoise s'en revont
Aus caroles qui fetes sont.
Et la chastelaine remaint:
Li cuers li trouble d'ire et taint
Et li mue trestoz el ventre.
Dedenz une garderobe entre
Ou une pucelete estoit
Qui aus piez du lit se gisoit,
Mes ele ne la pot veoir.
Dedenz le lit se lest cheoir
La chastelaine mout dolente;
Iluec se plaint et se gaimente,
Et dist: 'Ha! sire Dieus, merci,
Que puet estre que j'ai oï
Que ma dame m'a fet regret
Que j'ai afetie mon chienet?
Ce ne set ele par nului,

Ce sai je bien, fors par celui
Que j'amoie et trahie m'a ;
Ne ce ne li deïst il ja,
S'a li n'eüst grant acointance,
Et s'il ne l'amast sanz doutance
Plus que moi quant il m'a trahie !
Mais or voi qu'il ne m'aime mie,
Quant il me faut de couvenant.
Douz Dieus ! et je l'amoie tant
Comme riens peüst autre amer,
Qu'aillors ne pooie pensser
Nis une eure ne jor ne nuit !
Quar c'ert ma joie et mon deduit,
C'ert mes delis, c'ert mes depors,
C'ert mes solaz, c'ert mes confors.
Comment a lui me contenoie
De pensser, quant je nel veoie !
Ha ! amis, dont est ce venu ?
Que poez estre devenu,
Quant vers moi avez esté faus ?
Je cuidoie que plus loiaus
Me fussiez, se Dieus me conseut,
Que ne fust Tristans a Yseut ;
Plus vous amoie la moitié,
Se Dieus ait ja de moi pitié,

Que ne fesoie moi meïsmes ;
Onques avant, ne puis ne primes
En pensser n'en dit ne en fet
Ne fis ne poi ne grant mesfet
Par qoi me deüssiez haïr
Ne si vilainement trahir
Comme a noz amors depecier
Por autre amer et moi lessier,
Et descouvrir nostre conseil.
He ! lasse, amis, mout me merveil,
Que li miens cuers, si m'aït Dieus,
Ne fu onques vers vous itieus.
Car, se tout le mont et neïs
Tout son ciel et son paradis
Me donast Dieus, pas nes preïsse
Par couvenant que vous perdisse ;
Quar vous estiiez ma richece
Et ma santeà et ma leece,
Ne riens grever ne me peüst
Tant comme mes las cuers seüst
Que li vostres de riens m'amast.
Ha ! fine amor ! et qui penssast
Que cist feïst vers moi desroi,
Qui disoit, quant il ert o moi
Et je fesoie mon pooir

De fere trestout son voloir,
Qu'il ert toz miens, et a sa dame
Me tenoit et de cors et d'ame,
Et le disoit si doucement
Que le creoie vraiement,
Ne je ne penssaisse a nul fuer
Qu'il peüst trover en son cuer
Envers moi corouz ne haïne
Por duchoise ne por roïne;
Qu'a lui amer estoit si buen
Qu'a mon cuer prenoie le suen;
De lui me penssoie autressi
Quil se tenoit a mon ami
Toute sa vie et son eage,
Quar bien connois a mon corage,
S'avant morust, que tant l'amaisse
Que petit apres lui duraisse.
Estre morte o lui me fust mieus
Que vivre si que de mes ieus
Ne le veïsse nule foiz.
Ha! fine amor, est ce donc droiz
Que cil a ainsi descouvert
Nostre conseil, dont il me pert?
Qu'a m'amor otroier li dis
Et bien en couvenant li mis

Qu' a icele eure me perdroit
Que nostre amor descovreroit.
Et quant j'ai avant perdu lui,
Ne puis vivre apres itel anui.
Que sanz lui por qui je me dueil
Ne puis vivre ne je ne vueil;
De ma vie ne me plest point,
Ainz pri Dieu que la mort me doinst,
Et que, tout ausi vraiement
Comme j'ai aime leaument
Celui qui ce m'a porchacié,
Ait de l'ame de moi pitié,
Et a celui qui a son tort
M'a trahie et livrée a mort
Doinst honor. Et je li pardon;
Ne ma mort n'est se douce non,
Ce m'est avis, quant de lui vient;
Et quant de s'amor me sovient,
Por lui morir ne m'est pas paine.'

A tant se tut la chastelaine
Fors qu'ele dist en souspirant:
'Douz amis, a Dieu vous commant!'
A cest mot de ses braz s'estraint,
Li cuers li faut, li vis li taint:

Angoisseusement s'est pasmee,
Et gist pale et descoloree
En mit le lit, morte sanz vie.
Mes ses amis ne le set mie,
Qui se deduisoit en la sale
A la carole et dansse et bale;
Mes ne li plest riens qu'il i voie,
Quant cele a cui son cuer s'otroie
N'i voit point, dont mout se merveille.
Si a dit au duc en l'oreille:
'Sire, qu'est ce que vostre niece
Est demoree si grant piece,
Que n'est aus caroles venue?
Ne sai se l'avez mise en mue.'
Et li dus la carole esgarde,
Qui de ce ne s'estoit pris garde:
Celui a soi par la main trait,
Et droit en la chambre s'en vait;
Et quant illueques ne la trueve,
Au chevalier commande et rueve
Qu'en la garderobe la quiere,
Quar il le veut en tel maniere,
Por leenz entr'aus solacier
Com d'acoler et de besier.
Et cil qui li en sot hauz grez

Est en la garderobe entrez
Ou s'amie gisoit enverse
El lit, descolouree et perse.
Cil maintenant l'acole et baise,
Qui bien en ot et lieu et aise;
Mes la bouche a trovee froide
Et partout bien pale et bien roide,
Et au samblant que li cors moustre
Voit bien qu'ele est morte tout outre.
Tantost toz esbahiz s'escrie:
'Qu'est ce, las? est morte m'amie?'
Et la pucele sailli sus
Qui aus piez du lit gisoit jus,
Et dist: 'Sire, ce croi je bien
Qu'ele soit morte, qu'autre rien
Ne demanda puis que vint ci,
Por le corouz de son ami
Dont ma dame l'ataïna
Et d'un chienet la ramposna,
Dont li corouz li vint morteus.'
Et quant cil entent les mos teus
Que ce qu'il dist au duc l'a morte,
Sanz mesure se desconforte:
'Ha las!' dist il, 'ma douce amor,
La plus cortoise et la meillor

C'onques fust et la plus loial,
Comme trichierres desloial
Vous ai morte ! Si fust droiture
Que sor moi tornast l'aventure,
Si que vous n'en eüssiez mal ;
Mes le cuer aviez si loial
Que sor vous l'avez avant prise.
Mes je ferai de moi justise
Por la trahison que j'ai fete !'
Une espee du fuerre a trete
Qui ert pendue a .l. espuer,
Et s'en feri par mi le cuer :
Cheoir se lest sor l'autre cors ;
Cil a tant sainie qu'il est mors.

Et la pucele est hors saillie,
Quant ele vit les cors sanz vie :
Hidor ot de ce qu'ele vit.
Au duc qu'ele encontra a dit
Ce qu'ele a oï et veü
Si qu'ele n'i a riens teü,
Comment l'afere ert commencie,
Neïs du chienet afetie
Dont la Duchoise avoit parle.
Ez vous le duc adonc derve :

Tout maintenant en la chambre entre,
Au chevalier trest fors du ventre
L'espee dont s'estoit ocis.
Tantost s'est a la voie mis
Grant oirre droit a la carole,
Sanz plus tenir longue parole ;
Maintenant vint a la duchesse :
Si li a rendu sa promesse
Quar el chief li a embatue
L'espee qu' il aportoit nue,
Sanz parler, tant estoit iriez.
La duchoise chiet a ses piez,
Voiant toz ceus de la contree,
Dont fu la feste mout troublee
Des chevaliers qui la estoient,
Qui grant joie menee avoient.
Et li dus trestout ausi tost,
Oiant toz, qui oïr le vost,
Conta l'afere en mi la cort.
Lors n'i acelui qui n'en plort,
Et nommeement quant il voient
Les .II. amanz qui mort estoient,
Et la duchoise d'autre part :
A duel et a corouz depart
La cort et a meschief vilain.

Li dus enterrer l'endemain
Fist les amanz en .l. sarqueu,
Et la duchoise en autre leu.
Mes de l'aventure ot tele ire
C'onques puis ne l'oï on rire.
Errant se croisa d'outre mer,
Ou il ala sanz retorner,
Si devint ilueques Templiers.
Ha ! Dieus ! trestouz cilz encombriers
Et cis meschies por ce avint
Qu'au chevalier tant mesavint
Qu'il dist ce que celer devoit
Et que desfendu li avoit
S'amie qu'il ne le deïst
Tant com s'amor avoir vousist.
Et par cest example doit l'en
S'amor celer par si grant sen
C'on ait toz jors en remembrance
Que li descouvrirs riens n'avance
Et li celers en toz poins vaut.
Qui si le fait, ne crient assaut
Des faus felons enquerreors,
Qui enquierent autrui amors.

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